



# International Chinese Students: Enhancing the American Learning Experience

Dr. Tim Dorr and Beatrysa Voloshyna  
School of Business, University of Bridgeport, Bridgeport, CT

## Abstract

Approximately 975,000 international students are studying in the USA of which one third are from China. Research suggests that Chinese students face unique cross-cultural challenges in addition to the routine challenges faced by non-Chinese foreign students such as language, customs and exchanges.

This study identifies where international Chinese students need help adapting to the American education process as examined through a series of conversations with Chinese students using their social media tool WeChat.

It is our belief that studying this issue on a qualitative basis using these conversations will provide insight into the forms of help needed along with how American educators may modify their classroom pedagogy to more fully integrate the Chinese learner into the instructor's classroom.

## Perspective

Although an argument could be made that all foreign students need accommodation in an American classroom, Chinese students represent a unique situation. If we consider students from Europe, the Middle East and India their respective educational pedagogies reflect western culture thinking around education. As such these students are better prepared for what they will encounter in the American classroom. In contrast given China's history of cultural isolation the contemporary Chinese student is not adequately prepared versus their foreign counterparts.

## Power Distance

American power distance is different than Chinese. Chinese students faced with three different challenges in the USA: language ability, cultural awareness, and academic achievement. The U.S. culture, portrayed as individualistic, such as the Chinese as collectivism. It's pronounced in the distinctive difference in egregiousness of offensive behaviors, in communication and social norms.

The educational philosophies have completely different between West and Far East Asia. Chinese students have challenges with independent learning, course selection, group work and other regular phases of American learning system.

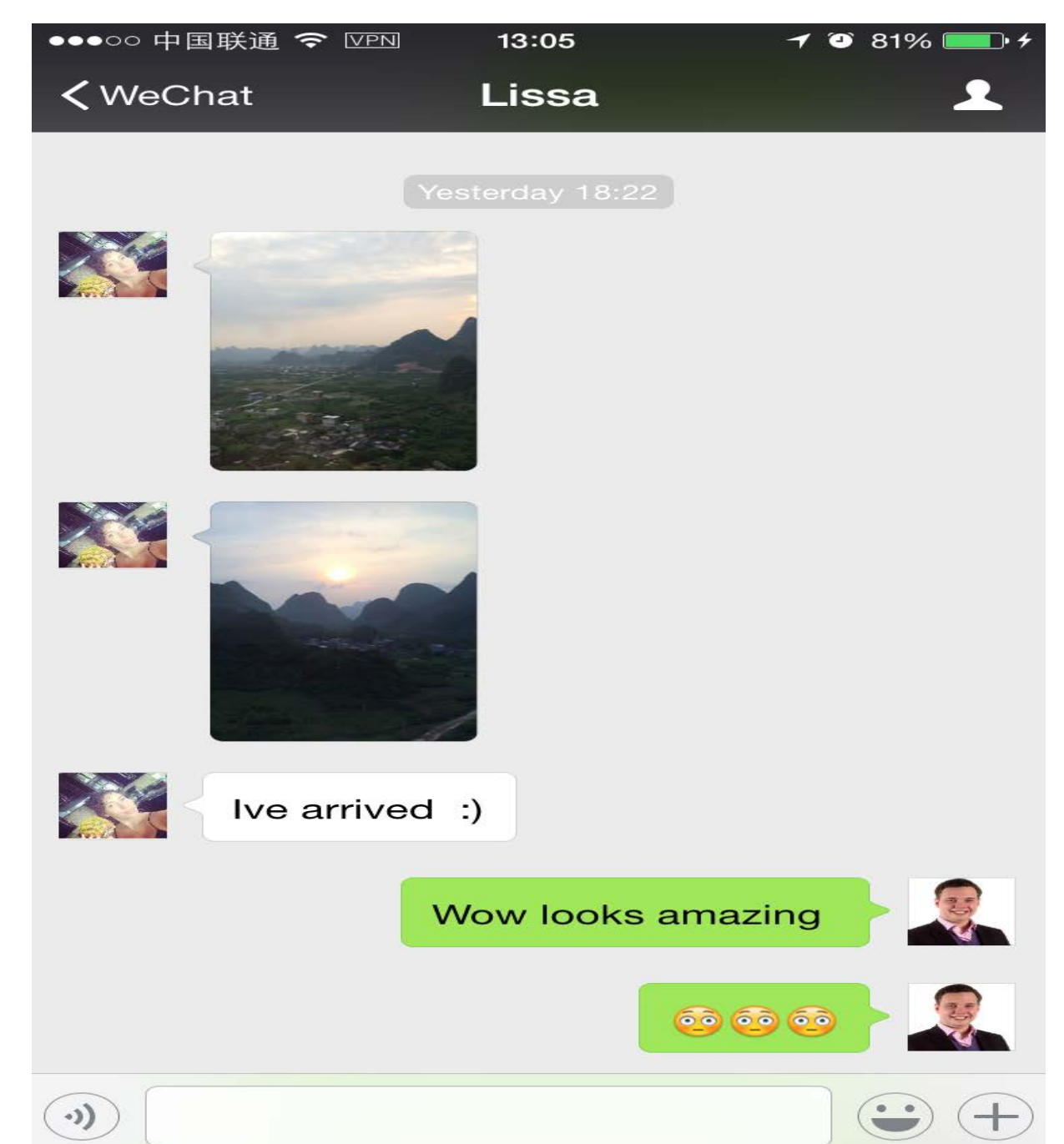
## Central Question?

More than 974,000 international students are studying in the USA; 304,040 of which are Chinese or about one in three of all international students. In contrast to other nationalities Chinese students have specific cross-cultural challenges. Cultural isolation can effect their studies.

Chinese international students confront an extreme culture gap: collectivism versus individualism. Chinese international students need support adapting to western pedagogy.

## WeChat Analysis

WeChat provides text messaging, hold-to-talk voice messaging, broadcast (one-to-many) messaging, video conferencing, video games, sharing of photographs and videos, and location sharing. First released in January 2011. As of December 2015, WeChat has over a billion created accounts, 650 million active users; with 70 million outside of China.



Chinese international students in the USA reported that they need support from online and local ethnic social groups. These are mainly involved in assisting with cultural assumptions and philological traditions between the two countries.

This study can help to resolve these issues. And Chinese international students can increase their education level in the USA.

